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COUNCIL

UPDATE

ONTARIO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

JANUARY 1986

October Youth Conference was a Resounding Success!

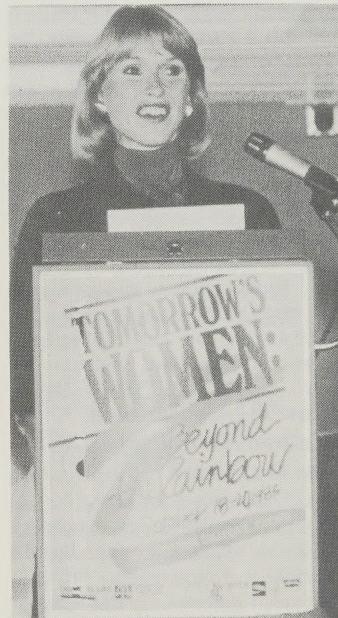
The balmy fall days of October are barely a memory during these winter months, but *Tomorrow's Women: Beyond the Rainbow*, a youth conference sponsored by the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues October 18-20 is not forgotten. Some 400 young women (Grade 11 students) descended on Toronto from all over Ontario to attend workshops, hear speakers, exchange ideas and meet new friends.

Shelley Peterson charmed and delighted her young audience when she kicked off the conference at a City Hall reception. She talked to students about choices they might make throughout life. A very enthusiastic crowd peppered her with questions in an attempt to find out

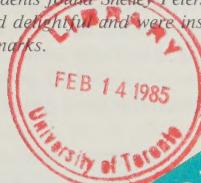
how she balanced motherhood, career and family. Her candid responses were much appreciated by her audience. "It's like talking to an older sister," one student remarked.

The following day, students attended various seminars throughout the day, but they all heard *Kim Ball*, from the *Women's Financial Planning Centre*, tell them how to make financial choices. "Loblaw's sells food, banks sell money, so shop around and don't pay bank fees," she advised students. "And, it's not too early to be buying RRSPs now, because if you put away \$1000 every year starting when you're 20, you'll have \$1.2 million when you retire," she told the stunned crowd.

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Students found Shelley Peterson charming and delightful and were inspired by her remarks.



Some of the students, along with their advisor, who attended Tomorrow's Women Beyond the Rainbow conference.

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Student helps plan School Conference

Pauline Peng, Toronto, was one of the delegates representing her Board at the Youth Conference. The 16-year-old student, who attends Leaside High, was approached by some teachers at her school to help organize a half-day mini-conference on Women in Non-Traditional Fields. Aimed at all Grade 10 students, this is the first time Leaside has attempted a conference pertaining to women's issues and Pauline is proud to be involved. "We'll be doing graphics, speeches, organizing the schedule and in general working with the teachers on this," Pauline told us. She has also put together a group called Female Students Network and Action Program. One of their objectives is to promote awareness of high school curriculum choices affecting future career paths of high school female students. They also plan to invite speakers to address them and other interested students.

Pauline wrote us a very thoughtful essay on how the youth conference affected her, and it is reprinted below, in an abridged version:

How the Conference Helped Me to Prepare For My Future

by Pauline Peng

I can really see the effect it had on me when I reflect on myself before the conference and after. I thought, before attending this conference, I had a pretty clear idea of where my future career path would lead. This conference, I thought, would merely reiterate all my thoughts and not really show me anything new.

The first workshop *When I Grow Up*

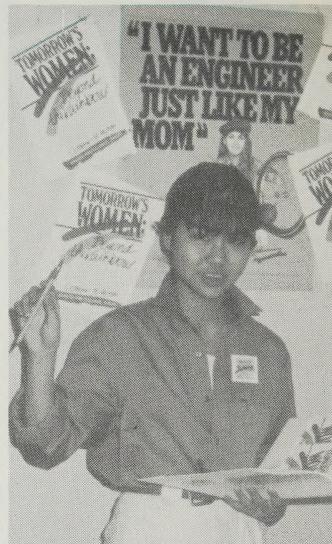
introduced me to many new obstacles that can stand in the way of my dreams, as well as differentiating between self-imposed and external obstacles.

I don't feel the information that I was exposed to discouraged me from wanting the dreams I've always had. No, in fact, I found the people in the workshops and panels encouraging and frank. It became evident to me that success is no free ride. Perhaps, for women, the troubles and tribulations we face are two-fold since we will have to resist a great deal of social stigma in the process. I guess this means reform is needed to break the barriers, bridge the gap and soothe the suspicions between men and women. I feel this reform can be accelerated only through informing young women like myself about the realities of life before we find out the hard way.

With the truth of the economic and social realities bearing down on us, I've learned I can lessen the impact by being resourceful, well organized and confident enough to reach for the brass ring and grab it.

This conference has awakened me to the turbulent issues and social stigma that our mothers are now facing and which we soon will be facing. I feel I have a new-found respect for the role of motherhood, even as we strive for "bigger and better things."

Generally, I believe this conference was an excellent means of "touching base" with young girls today. I feel a lot more prepared and a lot less naive of the world around me. I look forward to growing up.



The youth conference inspired delegate Pauline Peng to become more involved with women's issues at her school.

October Youth Conference

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Later that day, *Ian Scott, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues* addressed the students and advised them to go after jobs traditionally held by men. "I want you to consider a job not traditional for women. Men's jobs pay better. That may not be fair, but it's a fact of life," he told the students.

A definite highlight of the conference was the Saturday night rock concert by Cyndi Lauper clone *She Bop* which had students dancing in the aisles, an obvious attempt to get rid of that pent-up energy!

Sunday, students discussed strategies on how to take back the information they had gleaned during the conference. *Senator Anne Cools* presented a closing address on her view of peace. Then, students bid farewell to their new friends, gathered up all the material from the last two days, and dashed for buses which would take them and their newfound knowledge to destinations all over Ontario.

Updating Our Mailing List

All the young women who attended the Youth Conference have been added to Council's mailing list. At the moment, we know their addresses are correct! But that is not the case with the rest of you on our mailing list, and whenever we send out our newsletter, we get hundreds returned due to change of address etc. This, of course, is a tremendous waste of our postage budget and we would like you to take the time to fill in our tear-off coupon updating your information, if you want to continue to receive Council's newsletter. Look for it on the yellow flyer included in this newsletter.

Summary of Youth Conference Evaluations

When I Grow Up

At the start of day one of the conference, delegates were asked to consider the future, and what they expected it to hold for them personally. These were submitted to the facilitators prior to the beginning of the first session, and were subsequently analyzed by an outside company. Below are listed some of the results of the tabulation:

- 56% anticipated a "fulfilling career" which would make them "successful, rich and famous" but only 2% expected to climb the corporate ladder to get there! A mere 2% expected to be involved in women's issues.
- 61% anticipated going on to post secondary education, (college or university)
- In the nontraditional areas, 10% indicated their future would be in the scientific field and 3% specified an engineering career. 2% decided on the sports field, while 6% intend to pursue careers in the political arena.

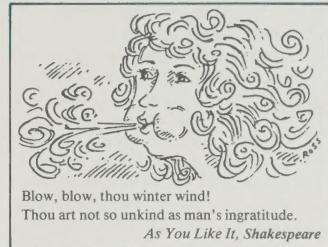
After Workshop Sessions

An evaluation form following the workshop sessions attempted to elicit a sense of what was new information for delegates and what they felt could be done:

- 91% clearly identified as most important, the need and the right to "make the most of my life" and "be determined and get what you want," to "set goals" and "not close doors".
- 19% identified as important the value of money and money management.
- 23% were surprised to learn that women earn less than men and were still discriminated against in the workplace. Another 13% were surprised they "could do what I want."
- 48% identified equality issues as most important today.

- As most important issues for women in the future, 39% indicated a variety of equality issues while another 32% felt self-confidence and self-determination were most important in the future.

A more complete summary is available in Council office.



Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude.

As You Like It, Shakespeare

Larry Ross

ATTENTION: Youth Conference Delegates

Did you represent your area at the Youth Conference?

If you attended the conference, we would like to hear how you shared your weekend experience in your own school. Did you implement the ideas in your "take-home strategies" booklet?

Lisa Campeau, from Hearst, gathered her friends and classmates together and told them about the conference. She gave them each a conference pin, and asked them to wear the pin for a week. She spoke about the conference to her teachers, and her Man in Society teacher showed a particular interest.

Lucy Gagliese who attends an all-girls school in Toronto addressed the entire school about the conference and what she learned there. She also asked for a bulletin board to be provided for women's issues and she and a core of classmates keep it well stocked with current news items and clippings pertaining to women's issues. While Lucy was at the conference, she viewed the film *Killing Us*

Softly which discussed the exploitation of women in advertising. She reviewed it for the bulletin board. A Man and Society teacher saw her review, talked to her about the film, and consequently all Grade 12 classes in the school viewed the film with discussion afterwards. This month, Lucy will be starting a Tomorrow's Women club at her school, and she hopes to hold meetings every other week.

These are just a few ideas of what you can do in your school. If you need some help, let us know. It's not too late to hold an event. If you did something, please drop us a note and tell us how you are promoting a Tomorrow's Women atmosphere in your school. Our address is:

The Ontario Advisory
Council on Women's Issues,
880 Bay St., 5th floor,
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3

Remember, if we all do a little, we all gain a lot!

Impact of Youth Conference

For two days, youth conference delegates participated in workshops, seminars and discussions on topics ranging from When I Grow Up, World of Work, Media and Me, to name only a few. In the World of Work, female role models discussed their careers and gave advice to young women about how to get started in their chosen fields. But what impact did the youth conference have on the young women who attended? On the last day of the conference, we asked delegates to write and let us know how the conference helped them to prepare for the future. About 40 of them wrote essays, and here are some of their comments, excerpted from their written work:

"Before the conference, I was considering dropping out of high school because I thought there was nothing in it for me. I was taking advanced level classes and doing fairly well, but I was bored with my life and where I lived and thought I would never get out of my isolated community. I know now I can get out to do what I want with my life. I feel I could go anywhere and do anything."

Mia Williamson,
Fort Frances.

Before I attended the conference, I wanted to become a legal secretary, but after listening to the accountant and the engineer, I have changed my mind."

Maria Nocita,
Stoney Creek.

"The conference really helped me to realize there are no borders or limits to what I can achieve. I've decided to set my goals high. I'm going to study sciences: chemistry, biology, physics and even computer sciences. I believe this will open up all types of career opportunities and options. I suppose you can never learn too much."

Lucy Gagliese,

Toronto.

"In concluding, I wish to quote one of my panelists: It is better to reach for the stars and miss, then to aim for the ground and hit."

Jennifer Gyetko,
Port Colborne.



Students in one of the workshop sessions which were kept to a small number, enabling all delegates to participate in discussions.

"Most importantly, I learned I have choices. I can do whatever I want with my future. I can have a career and a family if I want to. Being a woman should not affect my choices at all. The conference helped me to understand I can be anything and anyone I want to be."

Tanya Whelpdale,
Kleinburg.

"The conference made me aware that women have an endless amount

of options on careers including the traditional men's positions. I have also decided to go to Seneca College and pursue what I love most — auto mechanics. I plan on getting my Class A and then hitting the racing circuit. This is all against the wishes of my family who feel my love for cars is not proper for a lady."

Kathy Wright,
Toronto.



"Sexist? Don't be ridiculous—
we employ plenty of dames."

Windsor Consultation

In November, Council visited Windsor to hold a consultation with Windsor-area women's groups. During the first day of the two-day visit, students made various presentations to Council on subjects ranging from women in politics to women in sports. Skits, poetry readings, dramatic presentations and even a dance number on the subject of equal pay were a refreshing and innovative way for Council to hear about important issues. A special highlight was the parliamentary-style debate on the subject of women and poverty. Sandra Manzig, Council's Windsor representative, was delighted that Council provided a forum in which students could present their views on women's issues.

The next day, local women's groups addressed Council on issues

regarding Farm Women and Women and Labour to name only two. Representatives from the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Canadian Hearing Society as well as Dr. Mok from Windsor's Teen Health Centre spoke to Council.

Council member Manzig was pleased that Council came to her area, since "it was a great chance for Windsor area women to create stronger ties with Council," she said. In its role as advisory body to the Government on women's issues, Council attempts to represent the views of women from all parts of Ontario and travels throughout the province to hear area concerns. If you would like Council to plan a visit to your area, drop us a line at 880 Bay St., 5th floor, Toronto M7A 1N3.

New Council Member

This month, *Susan McDonald* was appointed as a new Council member for a three-year term. She is interested in the pay equity issue and would like to see a better relationship forged between women who work outside the home and those who don't. Having previously lived in the city, and now in the country, Susan believes she is in the unique position of being able to represent both urban and rural women's concerns. She lives with her family in Arva, a small community just outside London.

Ms. McDonald fills the vacancy on the Council left by *Kay Howland*, who resigned her seat in December. During her five-year term as Council member, Kay worked very hard on pension and family law reform. Kay is delighted that the Government is taking steps to introduce new legislation in both these areas. Council will miss her enthusiasm and dedicated work on women's issues.

Kingston Consultation

January 29-31 found Council in Kingston holding another area consultation. On Thursday, there were presentations to Council from Bridge House, Interval House, Community Support Program, Frontenac Family Referral Service, Community Mental Health Association, and Women for Sobriety. Women and Pensions and Women in Science were two other subjects covered. Friday afternoon, there were mini-sessions on Employment, Housing and Women and Mental Health. In between sessions during the two

days, Council members divided into pairs and visited local women's centres and businesses including the Kingston Women's Penitentiary, Joanna Atherson's cattle farm and the Co-operative Spirit Day Centre.

"We came away with a better understanding of what women are concerned about in Kingston," said Sam Ion, "and that's why we travel to different areas in the province."

Our next newsletter will give the locations and dates of future area consultations.



"No, I'm not a tomboy. Are you a janegirl?"

Pay Equity Forum

Council has prepared a draft response to the Government's Green Paper on Pay Equity. This draft was recently distributed to women's groups around Ontario.

On Friday March 7, Council is holding a pay equity forum at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. There is a separate flyer in this newsletter giving complete information. If it's missing, and you'd like further information, or if you would like to receive a copy of Council's draft response, please give us a call at (416) 965-5824 (collect).

Have you seen a cartoon which will amuse our readers?

Please send it along to us, including full credit for the source if it's available, and your name and address. If we laugh, we'll print it!

COUNCIL

UPDATE

The Council is an advisory body to the Ontario Government on all matters pertaining to women. Established at armslength from the Government, it is in the unique position of being the *ONLY* official advisory body on women's issues. This means that the Government has made a commitment to listen to its views and recommendations, and this unique relationship allows the Council to effectively challenge Government's direction and policies.

There are 16 members, including a President, all of whom are appointed by Cabinet on a part-time basis for three-year terms. Members come from around the Province, and for the most part, do not represent organizations or groups.

The Council attempts to bring a balance of views of women from across the Province to the attention of the Government. Its unique relationship with the Government gives it a direct channel to the ears of the decision-makers of Ontario.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sam Ion, President, Toronto

Ed Arundell, Toronto

Sarah Band, Toronto

Judith Hendin, Nepean

Sandra Kerr, Oakville

Dorothy Kirby-Rawn, Etobicoke

Annabelle Logan, London

Sandra Manziz, Windsor

Diane Marleau, Sudbury

Eva Marszewski, Toronto

Susan McDonald, Arva

Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Toronto

Maria Seymour, Kenora

Barbara Stone, St. Catharines

Kay Toye, Burlington

Glenna Carr, ex officio, Toronto

SPEAKERS: Members of Council are available for speaking engagements. Please write to Council with details of your meeting.

COUNCIL STAFF

Bridget Vianna, Executive Officer

Lydia Oleksyn, Administrative Assistant

Corinne Cowles, Secretary

COUNCIL ADDRESS

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TORONTO, ONTARIO M7A 1N3
(416) 965-5824.



President's Column

1986, a brand new year, the time when we make new commitments, promises and resolutions. The Ontario Liberal Government has made many promises to the women of Ontario and we all must make sure these promises are kept. We must all also make sure these commitments to women are not just Band-Aids, but comprehensive remedies to help us, the women of Ontario, help ourselves.

Finally! Marriage in our province is to be legally viewed as an economic partnership. The Family Law Reform Act revision is currently in its third reading, will be law as of March 1 and retroactive to last June 4. This means that even if a spouse did not make a financial contribution such as earning income during the marriage, he or she would be entitled to share equally because of their contribution made to family life. And about time too!

Support payments will automatically tie to the consumer price index, and violations of restraint orders will be a provincial offence carrying a maximum \$1,000 fine and 90 days in jail on the first conviction. The changes will also protect widows who have been left out of the will, and common-law spouses can ask for support payments after three years of living together rather than the current five-year limit.

In the next few weeks, there are proposed changes to be introduced in the Ontario Pension Benefits Act. Part-time employees would be eligi-

ble to join the company plan after two years' service, depending on income. An early retirement option from age 55 would be mandatory. Employers will be required to pay 50% of a plan member's accrued benefits, "termination, retirement and death." The best news of the proposed changes is the "locking in" of benefits after two years membership in a plan, enabling employees who change jobs to transfer the plan and employers' contributions. The bad news is that more than 50% of us have no pensions at all other than the Canada Pension Plan.

Our Pay Equity Forum is March 7th. Mark it on your calendar. Just because we've been discussing equal pay in one way or another since 1880 let's not slack off now when there's a glimmer of hope. It's time for action.

Bridget and I have just returned from Northwestern Ontario. An interesting if exhausting week meeting those of you from Kenora, Dryden, Fort Frances, and the reserves in the surrounding area. Your warmth will long be remembered and the concerns we discussed together will be expressed to the appropriate ministries.

Next month will find me in Huntsville, Kingston, Moosonee and Manitoulin Island.

Sam Ion

Need a Speaker?

Council President Sam Ion is available, free of charge, to speak to your women's group, club, meeting or organization. To date, she has travelled all over Ontario, including the north, addressing various women's groups, participating in native youth career fairs and leading panel discussions.

Although she has a busy schedule and some lead time is required, she is interested in speaking to as many Ontario women as possible. If you'd like to have Sam address your women's group, please write us a letter giving us the date, time, place, contact and phone number, and if it fits in with her schedule, she'll come. Address your queries to:

Lydia Oleksyn,
Ontario Advisory Council
on Women's Issues,
880 Bay St., 5th floor,
Toronto, Ont. M7A 1N3

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